



NETWORKS NEWS

FREE CALLS WITH ECLIPSE

Eclipse Internet has launched a combined broadband and telephony service. The 2Mbit/s broadband line costs £20 a month and offers free evening and weekend phone calls to all UK landlines. The service also includes a free broadband modem for new users. Existing ADSL users can use their own equipment and switch to Eclipse for free. For details, visit www.eclipsebroadband.com.

BT HIDES NETWORK POINTS

BT has announced that 3 is the first mobile operator to use its new shared antenna system for city centres and heritage sites. BT's Microconnect Distributed Antenna (MDA) technology enables mobile network operators to share small, low-power access points that can be concealed in street furniture such as road signs and lamp posts. This gives network operators greater coverage and signal strength. It also delivers a wider range of services, including local targeting. Signals are carried on a BT Wholesale fibre-optic network to a standard telephone exchange housing the mobile operator's own equipment. Cardiff will be the first city to receive the technology, but others are likely to follow soon.



BT's MDA technology lets mobile operators hide access points in lamp posts

HOTLIST NETWORK ATTACHED STORAGE

BUFFALO Terastation 1TB

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £636 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.dabs.com

DETAILS www.buffalotech.com

If your hard disk is already full of digital photographs and music files, Buffalo's 1GB Terastation is the perfect solution, providing an excellent way to boost storage on a network. This device has four 250GB hard disks. You can also use RAID to protect your valuable data. The system is very easy to set up, and considering the price of the individual components it's great value.



SPECIFICATIONS 1TB Storage (four 250GB hard disks), Gigabit Ethernet, four USB2 ports. Part code HD-H1.OTGLR5

REVIEW HOTSPOT LOCATORS

HAWKING TECHNOLOGY HWL2

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £55 inc VAT

SUPPLIER Comet 08705 425425

DETAILS www.hawkingeurope.com

TRUST WiFi Hot Spot Finder

RATING ★★★

PRICE £18 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.wehavethings.com

DETAILS www.trust.com

Wireless hotspots are becoming more common, but getting your notebook out every time you want to check for one is a real pain. Hawking Technology's HWL2 and Trust's WiFi Hot Spot Finder are handheld devices designed to detect wireless networks quickly.

Trust's product has the size advantage, as it is no bigger than a keyring. You simply push the button on the front to get detecting; the more lights that illuminate on the display, the stronger the WiFi signal. That's all it does, though. You still need to



start your notebook to see if the detected network has encryption turned on or not.

Hawking's HWL2 looks like a prop from *Star Trek*. However, it has plenty of features. Its hi-gain antenna makes it better at picking up WiFi signals, and it tells you the signal strength, wireless mode (b or g) and whether or not encryption is turned on. It's charged by USB, and when connected it also acts as an 802.11g WiFi adaptor; its hi-gain antenna should improve signal quality. Finally, Hawking provides a free hotspot locator application, which lists free and paid-for hotspots in a specified area. In short, it does everything you need to locate and connect to a wireless network.

Trust's product is cheaper and is fine for a cursory detection, but Hawking's HWL2 is by far the more accomplished product.

David Ludlow

SPECIFICATIONS Hawking HWL2 802.11b/g WiFi detector and network adaptor, displays signal strength, encryption detection and wireless mode detection. Part code HWL2
Trust Hot Spot Finder 802.11b/g WiFi detector, displays signal strength. Part code NB-300P

REVIEW WIRELESS PRINT SERVER

AXIS OfficeBasic USB Wireless G

RATING ★★

PRICE £100 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.misco.co.uk

DETAILS www.axis.com

Axis's OfficeBasic USB Wireless G lets you share a USB printer wirelessly on your network. It looks like a long mouse, but it doesn't take up much room and you can attach it to a wall for better reception.

As with many wireless print servers, the Wireless G can be tricky to install, particularly if you use it on a network where it won't get an IP address automatically. In this situation, the installation utility detects the print server but when you try to connect it says, "No print servers were found". Instead, you have to change your IP address to one in the same range as the print server's default address before you can connect.

The setup wizard then takes you through the installation. The steps are easy to follow and you can tell it which wireless network to join, as well as supplying the IP address and security settings. The OfficeBasic supports WEP and WPA-PSK, so you can connect it to any network. You can also control the server using its web-based management system. This is the easiest way to make changes once it is connected to your network.

When you have saved the settings, you need to add a printer. To do this you simply install a printer in Windows in the usual way and tell it to



use the LPT1 printer port. After the printer has installed its drivers, the Axis installation wizard installs a special dynamic link library (DLL) that redirects the printer port to the print server.

The server worked first time for us, but you need to repeat these steps for every computer that has to print. It's not quite as smooth as standard Windows printer sharing, where you can browse to a shared printer and install it automatically.

We had no trouble getting this print server to work on our network and the setup wizard makes installation fairly easy. But at £105 it's very expensive. We recommend the Linksys Wireless-G PrintServer, which is £50 cheaper.

David Ludlow

✓ Easy to get working; supports all network encryption modes

✗ Very expensive

SPECIFICATIONS 802.11g, USB2 port, print server. Part code 0228-003